Water supply and treatment in the UK

Studying environmental control and waste managemen

I'm Suresh Nesaratnam and I'm a Senior Lecturer in Environmental Engineering at the Open University. At the moment I'm the presentation Chair of Course T210 which is Environmental Control and Public Health. I was the production Chair as well so I've seen the course from inception to its present form, and it is now in its seventh year of presentation. I started life as a Chemical Engineer, I did my first degree at Imperial College in London, and then I did my Masters and my PhD in Birmingham, and the first job I got was in an environmental consultancy, so that's where my path began on environmental protection. That's where I worked first, and then I worked in an applied research institute in the Middle East, and then I worked for a government in the Middle East on pollution control regulation, and then I moved on to Scotland where I was working with offshore platforms, looking at pollution control on offshore oil and gas platforms. And finally we moved down south to be at Milton Keynes, to be near our parents, and I've been in the Open University for about eighteen years now. Apart from my professional career I've been on several different bodies and one of them was Ofwat, which is the Office of Water Services, and within Ofwat they've got customer service committees in different parts of the country and I was in the one for the Anglian region. The key ideas in the Course T210 are pollution control so we're looking at water pollution, air pollution, noise pollution, and waste pollution. Pollution control is vital because we rely on the environment for so many things. We need water to survive, we need clean air to keep us healthy, so for our wellbeing, and for the wellbeing of all our children and grandchildren, we really need to look after the environment. The course comprises a lot of text, we have DVD's, we have a home experiment kit, so the students get a chance to look at the theoretical side of pollution control, plus they get some practical experience using the home experiment kit. The home experiment kit consists of a number of chemicals, and other artefacts like glassware, so that people can set up mini-laboratories at home and undertake experiments with water, with waste, and so on. The practical experiments are indeed significant because you often learn by looking at things and by doing things, so the students actually get 'hands on' experience on experiments related to air, water, noise and waste. And the course is aimed at people who want learn a lot more about pollution control. Many people want to switch careers, they want to go into environmental conservation, environmental protection, so this is ideal for those people, but there are many people who just want an interest, want to gain knowledge of environmental protection, and this is ideal for them as well. The sort of skills they should come with are basic GCSE Maths and Science. We also have some preparatory units in the course which, you know, gives us basic information, but if they come with that already, it makes it a lot easier. From this course people get an appreciation of pollution, how it affects the environment, how it affects people, and then they will go away having gained knowledge of the techniques by which we can implement pollution control. Also, incidentally, we cover food safety in this course. T210 fits in to two undergrad degrees that we have at the Open University. One is on Environmental Studies, and the other is in Environmental Science. T210 is a second level course, and then we have a follow-on third level course, which people can take, and the two courses together comprise the Diploma in Pollution Control, which is recognised by a number of professional institutions.